



## HEALTH CARE REFORM IN THE U.S.



President Obama is committed to working with Congress to pass comprehensive health reform in his first year in order to control rising health care costs, guarantee choice of doctor, and assure high-quality, affordable health care for all Americans.

The President has vowed that the health reform process will be different in his Administration – an open, inclusive, and transparent process where all ideas are encouraged and all parties work together to find a solution to the health care crisis. Working together with members of Congress, doctors and hospitals, businesses and unions, and other key health care stakeholders, the President is committed to enacting comprehensive health care reform.

### White Health Care Reform information and links:

[The President Highlights Health Insurance Consumer Protections](#)

[Health Insurance Consumer Protections](#)

[White House Health Care Issues Page](#)

### ARTICLES (see health section below for more articles on this topic)

[Administrative Solutions in Health Reform](#) *National Academy of Public Administration*. July 20, 2009.

The panel examines administrative functions that are central to a variety of health reform proposals, defines the choices, summarizes what is known about them, and makes specific recommendations.

[The Ethics of Health Care Reform](#) by Merrill Matthews. *Institute for Policy Innovation*. July 20, 2009.

The report adds a philosophical dimension to health care reform debate, stating that, of all reform alternatives, only the consumer driven health care model is both ethical and sustainable.

[10 Reasons to Support the Health Care Reform Bill](#) *Families USA*. July 2009.

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## ECONOMY, BUSINESS, FINANCE & TRADE

### **Disasters and Economic Welfare: Can National Savings Explain Post-Disaster Changes in Consumption?** By Reinard Mechler. *World Bank*. July 1, 2009.

The debate on whether natural disasters cause significant macroeconomic impacts and hinder development is ongoing, most analyses have focused on impacts on GDP. The paper examines whether traditional and alternative national savings measures combined with adjustments for the destruction of capital stocks may contribute to better explaining post-disaster changes in welfare as measured by changes in consumption expenditure.

[\*\*ARTICLE 606\*\*](#)

### **The Coming Entrepreneurship Boom** by Dane Stangler. *Ewing Marion Kaufman Foundation*. June 2009.

Economists know that entrepreneurship will drive the economy back to health, but many people may be surprised to learn that the baby boom generation is behind the wheel, according to the study. It finds indications that the U.S. might be on the cusp of an entrepreneurship boom, not in spite of an aging population but because of it.

[\*\*ARTICLE 607\*\*](#)

### **The Small Business Economy: a Report to the President 2009.** *Small Business Administration*. July 2009.

The 2009 edition documents the 2008 recession's effects on small business as well as their role in the 2008 economy. The report includes chapters focusing on the state of small business with brief subsections on small business challenges such as health care and globalization, as well as contributions in job creation and innovation and financing.

[\*\*ARTICLE 608\*\*](#)

### **U.S. Net Investment Position at Yearend 2008** by Christopher A. Gohrband and Elena L. Nguyen. *Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Commerce*. June 26, 2009.

The U.S. net international investment position at yearend 2008 was -\$3,469.2 billion, preliminary, as the value of foreign investments in the United States continued to exceed the value of U.S. investments abroad. At yearend 2007, the U.S. net international investment position was -\$2,139.9 billion, revised. The -\$1,329.3 billion change in the U.S. net investment position from 2007 to 2008 resulted from (1) declines in the prices of U.S.-held

foreign stocks that surpassed declines in the prices of foreign-held U.S. stocks, (2) the depreciation of most major currencies against the U.S. dollar, and (3) net foreign acquisitions of financial assets in the United States that exceeded net U.S. acquisitions of financial assets abroad. [ARTICLE 609](#)

**High-Tech Immigrant Entrepreneurship in the U.S.** by David M. Hart et al. *Office of Advocacy, Small Business Administration*. July 16, 2009.

Sixteen percent of high-impact, high-tech firms have at least one immigrant founder, according to the study. Although these firms are concentrated in states with large immigrant populations, in most other respects they resemble high-impact, high-tech firms founded by native-born entrepreneurs. [ARTICLE 610](#)

**Global Reform and Personal Income Taxation, 1981-2005: Evidence from 189 Countries** by Klara Sabirianova Peter et al. *Institute for the Study of Labor*. Web posted July 2009.

The paper uses a panel of 189 countries to describe the salient trends that have emerged in national personal income tax systems spanning from 1981 to 2005. Using complete national income tax schedules, it calculates actual average and marginal tax rates at different income levels as well as time-varying measures of structural progressivity and complexity of national tax systems. The report shows that frequent alterations of tax structures have reduced tax rates at higher levels of income and diminished the overall progressivity and complexity of national tax systems; the degree of this change varies considerably across countries. [ARTICLE 611](#)

**Global Investment Promotion Benchmarking 2009: Summary Report.** *World Bank*. July 2009.

The report finds that over 70% of government investment-promotion intermediaries miss out on investment and job-creating opportunities by failing to provide accurate and timely information to potential investors. It shows how effectively government agencies are promoting their countries to foreign investors. It examines the ability of 181 countries to influence foreign investors' site-selection process. [ARTICLE 612](#)

## **U.S. GOVERNMENT & FOREIGN RELATIONS**

**Obama Rockets to Top of Poll on Global Leaders.** *World Public Opinion*. June 29, 2009.

U.S. President Barack Obama has the confidence of many publics around the world - inspiring far more confidence than any other world political leader according to a new poll of 20 nations by WorldPublicOpinion.org. On the other hand, Putin and Ahmadinejad receive lowest marks. [ARTICLE 613](#)

**U.S.-Russia Commission on POW/MIAs.** *Office of the Press Secretary, The White House*. July 6, 2009.

In an exchange of diplomatic notes on July 6, the U.S. and Russian Federation reached an understanding on a framework for the U.S.-Russia Joint Commission on Prisoners of War and Missing in Action. The Commission serves as a forum through which both nations seek to determine the fates of missing servicemen. [ARTICLE 614](#)

[U.S.-Russia Relations](#) . *U.S. Department of State*. July 28, 2009.

Philip H. Gordon, Assistant Secretary-Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs; Statement before the House Foreign Relations Committee.

**Clinton's Challenge in India** by Evan A. Feigenbaum. *Council on Foreign Relations*. July 16, 2009.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton heads to India with an opportunity to spur improving relations further, says Evan Feigenbaum. The emphasis should be on strengthening bilateral trade, energy, and nonproliferation ties, he says. [ARTICLE 615](#)

**State Department: Key Transformation Practices Could Have Helped in Restructuring Arms Control and Nonproliferation.** *U.S. Government Accountability Office*. July 2009.

In 2004, the Department of State (State) Inspector General (IG) concluded that State's three-bureau structure for conducting arms control and nonproliferation policy did not adequately address post-September 11 challenges, including possible terrorist use of weapons of mass destruction. The IG also noted that State had yet to formalize the responsibilities of the three bureaus in its Foreign Affairs Manual. Between late 2005 and early

2006, State created a new two-bureau structure to better address these issues and improve efficiency. GAO assesses the reorganizations and their effectiveness. [ARTICLE 616](#)

**Empty Promises: What Happened to 'Development' in the WTO's DOHA Round?** *Oxfam International*. July 16, 2009.

The report says that the Doha Round has become an exercise in prizing open developing country markets rather than one to rebalance decades of unfair agricultural and industrial trade rules. "Rich nations would do better to renounce their self-interested negotiating tactics and get back to original premise of the Doha Round if they are sincere about getting these negotiations back on track," Jeremy Hobbs, Oxfam International executive director, said. [ARTICLE 617](#)

**The National Voter Registration Act at 15** by Frances Fox Piven. *Project Vote*. July 2009.

Signed into law by President Clinton in 1993, the National Voter Registration Act was hailed by some as "the final achievement of the 1960's voting rights revolution," and proponents estimated that it would add 50 million Americans to the voting rolls. However, according to the report, the lack of enforcement, failures of state and federal leadership, and restrictive court decisions have left the full potential of the NVRA unrealized, and have left millions of disenfranchised Americans still awaiting the promise of a truly inclusive democracy. [ARTICLE 618](#)

**Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2008.** *U.S. Bureau of Census*. July 20, 2009.

About 131 million people reported voting in the 2008 U.S. presidential election, an increase of 5 million from 2004, according to the table package of the U.S. Census Bureau. The increase included about 2 million more black voters, 2 million more Hispanic voters and about 600,000 more Asian voters, while the number of non-Hispanic white voters remained statistically unchanged.

**Questions for Judge Sotomayor on the use of Foreign and International Law** by Steven Gorves. *Heritage Foundation*. July 6, 2009.

Judge Sonia Sotomayor has not yet had occasion to cite to or rely upon foreign or international law to interpret the U.S. Constitution. Based upon a recent speech, it appears that she will continue in the tradition of sitting members of the Court in polling "the world community" and citing rulings of foreign and international courts. The author thinks she should be questioned at length during her confirmation hearing. [ARTICLE 619](#)

**Sonia Sotomayor: the Criminal Justice Record.** *U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee*. July 7, 2009.

The report shows results of a comprehensive study of Supreme Court nominee Judge Sonia Sotomayor's appellate decisions in criminal justice cases. "Based on a review of more than 800 criminal cases, it can be said with confidence that Judge Sotomayor is unquestionably a consensus judge on criminal justice issues," Chairman Leahy said. "In fact, Judge Sotomayor's criminal justice record proves that she is a moderate judge, whose decisions in criminal cases rarely differ from those of her colleagues on the Federal bench." [ARTICLE 620](#)

## ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY & CLIMATE CHANGE

**India Should Combine Tough Climate Stand with Green Policy** by Nandan Nilekani. *Yale Global*. July 2009.

Facing a serious global warming threat, India has to focus on mitigation and green economy says the author. 80% of India's rural population depends on the health of its rivers and land. In the end, "low-carbon" policies and development don't have to be mutually exclusive. India's future depends on the country addressing climate change today, lest it suffer unwanted results tomorrow. [ARTICLE 621](#)

**Undisclosed Risk: Corporate Environmental and Social Reporting in Emerging Asia** by Dana Krechowicz and Hiranya Fernando. *World Resources Institute*. July 2009.

The report focuses on corporate transparency on environmental risks, and lays the groundwork for understanding environmental disclosure and reporting issues in emerging markets through an investor lens. It is the second report in a series establishing the link between issues like climate change, air pollution, water supply, and natural resource depletion and traditional financial analysis on corporate value and financial strength for companies in six key Asian economies, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam. [ARTICLE 622](#)

**Greenhouse Gas Legislation: Summary and Analysis of HR 2454 as Reported by the House Committee on Energy and Commerce** by Mark Holt and Gene Whitney. *Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress*. June 17, 2009.

H.R. 2454 contains provisions that would amend the Clean Air Act to establish a cap-and-trade system designed to reduce U.S. greenhouse gas emissions 17% below 2005 levels by 2020 and 83% below 2005 levels by 2050. The market-based approach would establish an absolute cap on the emissions and would allow trading of emissions permits. [ARTICLE 623](#)

**Climate Change Adaption, Disaster Risk Reduction and Social Protection** by Mark Davies et al. *Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development*. July 8, 2009.

Poorer developing countries are especially vulnerable to climate change because of their geographic exposure, low incomes and greater reliance on climate sensitive sectors, particularly agriculture. People exposed to the most severe climate-related hazards are often those least able to cope with the associated impacts, due to their limited adaptive capacity. This in turn poses multiple threats to economic growth, wider poverty reduction, and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Within this context, there is growing recognition of the potential role of social protection as a response to the multiple risks and short and long-term shocks and stresses associated with climate change. [ARTICLE 624](#)

**OPEC Revenues Fact Sheet.** *Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries*. July 2009.

The members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) could earn \$545 billion of net oil export revenues in 2009 and \$672 billion in 2010. Last year, OPEC earned \$968 billion in net oil export revenues, a 42% increase from 2007. Saudi Arabia earned the largest share of these earnings, \$285 billion, representing 29% of total OPEC revenues. [ARTICLE 625](#)

**Crafting a Carbon Market from India's Grassroots** by Anna da Costa. *Worldwatch Institute*. July 8, 2009.

In India, the carbon market is starting to take root. The country is now home to a large share of carbon-offset projects, many of which are certified under the Clean Development Mechanism of the Kyoto Protocol. Yet forests remain poorly represented in these efforts. This may not be the case for long, however, if one of India's climate-focused entrepreneurs has his way. [ARTICLE 626](#)

**Energy and Water: Preliminary Observations on the Links Between Water and Biofuels and Electricity Production** by Anu Mittal. *U.S. Government Accountability Office*. July 9, 2009.

Water and energy are inexorably linked, energy is needed to pump, treat, and transport water and large quantities of water are needed to support the development of energy. However, both water and energy may face serious constraints as demand for these vital resources continues to rise. [ARTICLE 627](#)

**Energy Efficiency in Buildings: Critical Barriers and Congressional Policy** by Paul W. Parformak et al. *Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress*. June 24, 2009.

Federal policymakers are debating a range of initiatives to limit U.S. emissions of CO<sub>2</sub>. The American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009 would set a target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions 17% below 2005 levels by 2020. In the electricity industry, increasing the energy efficiency of buildings is viewed by many as the measure with the greatest potential to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions quickly and at relatively low cost. [ARTICLE 628](#)

**Oil from Stone: Securing America's Energy Future** by H. Sterling Burnett and Tomas Castell. *National Center for Policy Analysis*. July 9, 2009.

Rising prices and security concerns raise important questions about America's energy options. Currently, the U.S. imports 66% of its oil, about 4.7 billion barrels per year. However, there are vast amounts of oil shale which can be converted into high-quality liquid fuels. The U.S. Department of Energy conservatively estimates oil shale formations in Colorado, Utah and Wyoming contain 800 billion barrels of recoverable oil, more than three times the proven reserves of Saudi Arabia, according to the report. [ARTICLE 629](#)

**Two Recent Studies of Regional Differences in the Effects of Policies that Would Price Carbon Dioxide Emissions.** *Congressional Budget Office*. July 9, 2009.

Two teams of experts, one affiliated with the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) and one affiliated with Resources for the Future (RFF) , have estimated regional differences in the effects of policies that would increase the prices of fossil fuels in rough proportion to the carbon dioxide (CO2) emitted when they are combusted, as would occur under a cap-and-trade program. [ARTICLE 630](#)

**Accelerating Smart Grid Investments.** *World Economic Forum.* July 2009.

The report shows how smart grids can be the backbone infrastructure for tomorrow's energy solutions and green economy. The world's electricity systems are increasingly outdated and coming under pressure in the face of rising demand, climate change and the advent of transformative technologies. Smart grids have been hailed as a key to sustainably meeting emerging energy needs in a new age where clean energy is at a premium, networks require flexibility to incorporate renewable energy and customers' demands for greater transparency and control over their consumption are growing. [ARTICLE 631](#)

**Climate Science 2008 Major New Discoveries** by Kevin Levin and Dennis Tirpak. *World Resources Institute.* July 2009.

The report argues that human activity is the primary cause of rising temperatures and that climate change impacts are accelerating. The compilation of peer-reviewed research includes evidence that melting rates for mountain glaciers around the world doubled between 2004 and 2006, and that more than 28,000 plant and animal species are changing habits due to new climatic conditions. [ARTICLE 632](#)

**Climate Change and Vulnerable Societies** by Kemal Dervis. *Brookings Institution.* July 23, 2009.

Kemal Dervis testifies before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs on America's critical role in supporting climate change adaptation in the world's most vulnerable communities. Dervis recommends enacting globally accepted policies to effectively tackle climate change and protect those most affected. [ARTICLE 633](#)

**Investing in our Future: the Economic Case for Rebuilding Mid-Atlantic Fish Populations** by John M. Gates. *Pew Environment Group.* July 23, 2009.

The report reveals significant potential financial benefits of rebuilding four fish species in the Mid-Atlantic: summer flounder, black sea bass, butterfish and bluefish. It provides an analysis and estimates direct financial benefits by comparing status quo management of four particular fish species with what would have happened, if those populations had been rebuilt by 2007. [ARTICLE 634](#)

**A Preliminary Analysis of the Effects of HR 2454 on U.S. Agriculture.** *USDA.* July 22, 2009.

The analysis assumes no technological change, no alteration of inputs in agriculture, and no increase in demand for bio-energy as a result of higher energy prices. Therefore, it overstates the impact of the climate legislation on agriculture costs in the short, medium, and long-term. In USDA's analysis, short-term costs remain low because of provisions that reduce the impacts of the bill on fertilizer costs. In fact, the impact on net farm income is less than a 1% decrease. In the short run, agricultural offset markets may cover these costs. [ARTICLE 635](#)

**Requirements and Procedures for Consumer Assistance to Recycle and Save Program.** *U.S. Department of Transportation.* July 2009.

The final rule sets forth requirements and procedures for the voluntary vehicle trade-in and purchase/lease program under the Consumer Assistance to Recycle and Save Act of 2009. The program helps consumers pay for a new, more fuel efficient car or truck from a participating dealer when they trade in a less fuel efficient vehicle. The rule establishes a process by which dealers can register in order to participate in the program and establishes the criteria this agency will use to determine which disposal facilities are eligible to receive and either crush or shred the trade-in vehicles. [ARTICLE 636](#)

## **AGRICULTURE & FOOD**

**Adoption of Genetically Engineering Crops in the U.S.** *Economic Research Service, USDA.* July 1, 2009.

U.S. farmers have adopted genetically engineered crops widely since their introduction in 1996, notwithstanding uncertainty about consumer acceptance and economic and environmental impacts. Soybeans and cotton



genetically engineered with herbicide-tolerant traits have been the most widely and rapidly adopted GE crops in the U.S., followed by insect-resistant cotton and corn. [ARTICLE 637](#)

**Food Security Assessment, 2008-09.** *U.S. Department of Agriculture.* June 2009.

Food security in 70 developing countries is projected to deteriorate over the next decade, according to the report. Despite a decline in food prices in 2008, deteriorating purchasing power and food security are expected due to the growing financial deficits and higher inflation that have occurred in recent years. [ARTICLE 638](#)

**The Interplay of Regulation and Market Incentives in Providing Food Safety** by Michael Ollinger and Danna Moore. *U.S. Department of Agriculture.* July 2009.

The report examines the impact of process regulations mandated under the Pathogen Reduction/Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point rule by the Food Safety and Inspection Service of USDA on food safety process control. Processing regulations include sanitation and other tasks related to food safety; management-determined actions include capital investment and other actions independent of process regulations, but possibly driven by performance standards. [ARTICLE 639](#)

**The Transmission of Exchange Rate Changes to Agricultural Prices** by William Liefert and Suresh Persaud. *U.S. Department of Agriculture.* July 2009.

Movements in countries' exchange rates can substantially change the prices of goods faced by producers and consumers and thereby affect incentives to produce, consume, and trade goods. The data shows that price and exchange rate transmission for agricultural products is low in most developing economies, partly because of trade policies but also because of inadequate infrastructure and other market deficiencies. [ARTICLE 640](#)

**Manure Use for Fertilizer and Energy: report to Congress** by James M. MacDonald et al. *U.S. Department of Agriculture.* Web posted July 2009.

The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 directed the USDA to evaluate the role of animal manure as a source of fertilizer, and its other uses. About 5% of all U.S. cropland is currently fertilized with livestock manure, and corn accounts for over half of the acreage to which manure is applied. Expanded environmental regulation through nutrient management plans will likely lead to wider use of manure on cropland, at higher production costs, but with only modest impacts on production costs, commodity demand, or farm structure. [ARTICLE 641](#)

## EDUCATION

**Characteristics of Public School Districts in the U.S.** by Paola Aritomi et al. *U.S. Department of Education.* June 30, 2009.

The study presents selected findings from the school district data file of the 2007-08 Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS). SASS is a nationally representative sample survey of public, private, and Bureau of Indian Education-funded K-12 schools, principals, and teachers in the 50 states and the District of Columbia. The sample was designed so that national-, regional-, and state-level elementary, secondary, and combined public school estimates can be made. [ARTICLE 642](#)

**Ready to Assemble: Grading State Higher Education Accountability Systems** by Chad Aldeman and Kevin Carey. *Education Sector Reports.* June 30, 2009.

To give all students the best possible postsecondary education, states must create smart, effective higher education accountability systems, modeled from the best practices of their peers, and set bold, concrete goals for achievement. [ARTICLE 643](#)

**Assessment and Innovation in Education** by Janet Looney. *OECD.* July 16, 2009.

The study proposes three main ways of combining assessment and innovation: 1) developing a wide range of performance measurements for both students and schools; 2) rethinking the alignment of standards and assessment; 3) measuring the impact of assessments on teaching and learning. [ARTICLE 644](#)

**Achievement Gaps: How Black and White Students in Public Schools Perform in Mathematics and Reading on the National Assessment of Educational Progress.** *Nat'l Center for Ed. Statistics.* July 2009.

In 2007, mathematics scores for both Black and White public school students in grades 4 and 8 nationwide were higher than in any previous assessment, going back to 1990. This was also true for Black and White fourth-graders on the NAEP 2007 Reading Assessment. For grade 8, reading scores for both Black and White students were higher in 2007 than in 1992, as well as the previous assessment year, 2005. White students had higher scores than Black students, on average, on all assessments.

[ARTICLE 645](#)

**2009 World Conference on Higher Education: the New Dynamics of Higher Education and Research for Societal Change and Development.** *U.N. Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization.* July 2009.

The UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education closed on July 8<sup>th</sup> with a call to governments to increase investment in higher education, encourage diversity, and strengthen regional cooperation to serve societal needs.

[ARTICLE 646](#)

**Rethinking School Feeding: Social Safety Nets, Child Development, and the Education Sector** by Donald Bundy et al. *The World Bank.* July 2009.

The review provides guidance on how to develop and implement school feeding programs, in the context of both a productive safety net as well as a fiscally sustainable investment in human capital.

[ARTICLE 647](#)

**Charter School Replication: Growing a Quality Charter School Sector.** *National Association of Charter School Authorizers.* July 2009.

"Replication" is the practice of a single charter school board or management organization opening several more schools that are each based on the same school model. The most rapid strategy to increase the number of new high-quality charter schools available to children is to encourage the replication of existing quality schools, according to the report.

[ARTICLE 648](#)

**Ethics Education and Scientific and Engineering Research: What's Been Learned? What Should be Done? Summary of a Workshop** Rachelle Hollander and Carol R. Arenberg, eds. *National Academy of Engineering.* July 2009.

Increasing complexity and competitiveness in research environments, the prevalence of interdisciplinary and international involvement in research projects, and the close coupling of commerce and academia have created an ethically challenging environment for young scientists and engineers. For the past several decades, federal research agencies have supported projects to meet the need for mentoring and ethics training in graduate education in research.

[ARTICLE 649](#)

**New York Leads in Per-Pupil Education Spending at Nearly \$16,000.** *U.S. Bureau of Census.* July 2009.

Public schools in New York spent \$15,981 per pupil in 2007, which was more than any other state or state equivalent, according to new data released by the U.S. Census Bureau. On average, each state spent \$9,666 per pupil in 2007, a 5.8% increase over 2006.

[ARTICLE 650](#)

**Obesity Prevalence Among Low-Income, Preschool-Aged Children; United States, 1998-2008.** *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.* July 24, 2009.

One of 7 low-income, preschool-aged children is obese, but the obesity epidemic may be stabilizing, according to the study. Prevalence of obesity in low-income two to four year-olds increased from 12.4% in 1998 to 14.5% in 2003 but rose to only 14.6% in 2008, said the report.

[ARTICLE 651](#)

## **SOCIAL ISSUES**

**Down from the Mountain: Skill Upgrading and the Wages in Appalachia.** *Institute for the Study of Labor.* June 2009.

The report compares Appalachia to other parts of the U.S., and finds that gaps in both skill levels and returns account for the lack of high wage male workers. For women, skill shortages are important across the distribution.



Because rural wage gaps are insignificant, the results suggest that widening wage inequality between Appalachia and the rest of the U.S. owes to a shortage of skilled cities. [ARTICLE 652](#)

**To Walk the Earth in Safety.** *U.S. Department of State.* July 8, 2009.

The report summarizes the accomplishments of the U.S. Humanitarian Mine Action Program. In 2008, the Department of State provided \$123.1 million in mine clearance and weapons destruction assistance to 35 countries. Among the report's success stories is Cambodia, where U.S. humanitarian mine action has contributed to a 72% decline in explosives-related casualties. [ARTICLE 653](#)

**America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2009.** *Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics.* July 2009.

The report is a compendium of indicators illustrating both the promises and the difficulties confronting young people. The report presents 40 key indicators on important aspects of children's lives. These indicators are family and social environment, economic circumstances, health care, physical environment and safety, behavior, education, and health. [ARTICLE 654](#)

**Refugees and Asylees: 2008.** *U.S. Department of Homeland Security.* June 2009.

The United States provides refuge to persons who have been persecuted or have a well-founded fear of persecution through two programs: one for refugees, persons outside the U.S., and one for asylees, persons in the U.S. The Office of Immigration Statistics' report provides information on the number of persons admitted to the United States as refugees or granted asylum in the United States in 2008. [ARTICLE 655](#)

**Homes not Handcuffs: the Criminalization of Homelessness in U.S. Cities.** *National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty and National Coalition for the Homeless.* July 2009.

The housing and homelessness crisis in the U.S. has worsened over the past two years, particularly due to the current economic and foreclosure crises. People being evicted from foreclosed properties and the economic crisis in general have contributed to the growing homeless population. Even though most cities do not provide enough affordable housing, shelter space, and food to meet the need, many cities use the criminal justice system to punish people living on the street for doing things that they need to do to survive. [ARTICLE 656](#)

**Social Protection for the Economic Crisis: the U.S. Experience** by Gary Burtless. *Brookings Institution.* July 15, 2009.

As unemployment continues to climb, questions have arisen as to whether the stimulus package is working, how well it was designed and when it will have an impact. The author finds that efforts at creating a social safety net and fiscal relief for the states were appropriately targeted and are working. [ARTICLE 657](#)

**Microfinance for Housing: Assisting the "Bottom Billion" and the "Missing Middle"** by Sally R. Merrill. *Urban Institute.* Web posted July 15, 2009.

UN-HABITAT has calculated that one-sixth of humanity, 1 billion people, currently live in slums. In the next 30 years, this figure could rise to over 31% of the world's population. The vast majority of these households will never be able to afford, nor have access to, formal mortgage finance. Thus, increasing the availability of microfinance to help provide shelter and sanitation will become increasingly important. [ARTICLE 658](#)

**Highlights of Foundation Yearbook.** *Foundation Center.* July 2009.

The report provides an overview of the state of foundation giving in the current year and beyond, comparisons of foundation activities by foundation size, and breakdowns of foundation resources by geographic location and grant-maker type. [ARTICLE 659](#)

**A Profile of Successful Pell Grant Recipients** by Christina Chang Wei et al. *National Center for Education Statistics.* July 21, 2009.

The report describes characteristics of college graduates who received Pell Grants as compared to graduates who were not Pell Grant recipients. For both groups of graduates, data from the Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal Study were analyzed to determine the time it took them to complete a bachelor's degree as well as the percentage who enrolled in graduate school within one year of college graduation. [ARTICLE 660](#)

**Substance Abuse Prevention Dollars and Cents: a Cost-Benefit Analysis.** *Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.* July 21, 2009.

Communities can better develop comprehensive prevention strategies based on their unique needs and characteristics and use cost-benefit ratios to help guide their decisions with the help of the publication by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). [ARTICLE 661](#)

**Aligning Temporary Immigration Visas with U.A. Labor Market Needs: the Case for a New System of Provisional Visas** by Demetrios G. Papademetriou et al. *Migration Policy Institute.* July 24, 2009.

The report proposes creation of a new stream of visas to provide for the future flows of workers needed by the U.S. economy, stressing that comprehensive immigration reform legislation must include reform of the employment-based immigration system if it is to be effective. [ARTICLE 662](#)

**A Portrait of Mormons in the U.S.** by Allison Pond. *Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life.* July 24, 2009.

In Utah, July 24 is Pioneer Day, a state holiday commemorating the day in 1847 when the first Mormon settlers, led by Brigham Young, entered the Salt Lake Valley. Today, members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and other Mormon groups make up 58% of Utah's population and 1.7% of the total U.S. adult population, according to the report. [ARTICLE 663](#)

**Veterans and Agent Orange: Update 2008.** *Institute of Medicine.* July 2009.

The report finds evidence that exposure to Agent Orange and other herbicides used during the Vietnam War is associated with an increased chance of developing ischemic heart disease and Parkinson's disease for Vietnam veterans. The report is the latest in a congressionally mandated series by the IOM that reviews evidence on the health effects of these herbicides and a dioxin, TCDD, that contaminated some of the defoliants. [ARTICLE 664](#)

**The Ill-Prepared U.S. Workforce** by Jill Casner-Lotto et al. *The Conference Board.* July 14, 2009.

The report shows that U.S. employers continue to struggle with an ill-prepared workforce, finding new hires lack crucial basic and applied skills. For the most part, employer-sponsored readiness training is not successfully correcting these deficiencies. Almost half of respondents said they have to provide readiness training for new hires and the majority rates their programs as only "somewhat successful." [ARTICLE 665](#)

**Unequal Employment: Racial Disparities in Unemployment Vary Widely by State** by Algernon Austin. *Economic Policy Institute.* July 15, 2009.

The United States is suffering its most severe economic crisis in decades. This economic hardship is not shared equally, however, and unemployment rates in many states are far worse than the national figures would suggest, according to the study. The differences *between* states mask sometimes greater gaps *within* them, gaps defined by wide, sometimes growing disparities in unemployment rates by race and ethnicity. [ARTICLE 666](#)

## **DEFENSE & SECURITY**

**Terror from the Right.** *Southern Poverty Law Center.* July 1, 2009.

The report represents the stories of plots, conspiracies and racist rampages since 1995; plots and violence waged against a democratic America. Each of these plots aimed to make changes in America through the use of political violence. [ARTICLE 667](#)

**The Phoenix Program and Contemporary Counterinsurgency** by William Rosenau and Austin Long. *RAND Corporation.* July 14, 2009.

The authors explore the Viet Cong underground, the target of Phoenix operations, and the early U.S. and South Vietnamese operations designed to dismantle it. Tracing the provenance and evolution of the Phoenix Program from these early operations, they identify the program's three elements and assess its overall success. They conclude that the truth about Phoenix and its effectiveness lies somewhere between the extremes of today's competing claims: The program made positive contributions to counterinsurgency in South Vietnam, but its political costs to the United States were substantial. [ARTICLE 668](#)

**Law Enforcement and Private Citizens Killed by Concealed Handgun Permit Holders.** *Violence Policy Center.* July 2009.

Concealed handgun permit holders killed at least seven police officers and 44 private citizens in 31 incidents during the period May 2007 through April 2009 according to the study. The release of the study comes as the U.S. Senate is expected to take up an amendment to the defense authorization bill that would create a de facto national concealed carry system, overriding the rights of states with more restrictive laws governing the carrying of concealed handguns. [ARTICLE 669](#)

## **RESEARCH, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

**Images: New NASA Satellite Survey Reveals Dramatic Arctic Sea Ice Thinning.** *NASA.* July 7, 2009.

Arctic sea ice thinned dramatically between the winters of 2004 and 2008, with thin seasonal ice replacing thick older ice as the dominant type for the first time on record. The new results, based on data from a NASA Earth-orbiting spacecraft, provide further evidence for the rapid, ongoing transformation of the Arctic's ice cover.

[News Release](#)

[ARTICLE 670](#)

**National Institutes of Health Guidelines on Human Stem Cell Research.** *Nat'l Inst's of Health.* July 2009.

On March 9, 2009, President Obama issued Executive Order 13505: Removing Barriers to Responsible Scientific Research Involving Human Stem Cells. In accordance, these Guidelines implement Executive Order 13505, as it pertains to extramural NIH-funded stem cell research, establish policy and procedures under which the NIH will fund such research, and helps ensure that NIH-funded research in this area is ethically responsible, scientifically worthy, and conducted in accordance with applicable law. [ARTICLE 671](#)

**Public Praises Science; Scientists Fault Public, Media.** *Pew Research Center for the People & the Press.* July 9, 2009.

Americans like science, says the report. Overwhelming majorities say that science has had a positive effect on society and that science has made life easier for most people. Most also say that government investments in science, as well as engineering and technology, pay off in the long run. Scientists are very highly rated compared with members of other professions, however, the public has a far less positive view of the global standing of U.S. science than do scientists themselves. [ARTICLE 672](#)

**Ensuring the Integrity, Accessibility and Stewardship of Research Data in the Digital Age.** *National Academy of Sciences.* July 22, 2009.

Though digital technologies and high-speed communications have expanded the capabilities of scientists, allowing them to analyze and share vast amounts of data, these technologies are also raising difficult questions for researchers, institutions, and journals. Because digital data can be manipulated more easily than other forms, they are particularly susceptible to distortion. Questions about how to maintain the data generated, who should have access, and who pays to store them can be controversial, according to the study. [ARTICLE 673](#)

## **ASIA & PACIFIC REGION**

**U.S. – Japan Investment Initiative 2009 Report.** *U.S. Department of State and Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry of Japan.* July 6, 2009.

Since 2001, the United States-Japan Investment Initiative has served as a forum for bilateral cooperation on issues related to foreign direct investment (FDI) in both countries. FDI is a critical contributor to the economic prosperity of both countries and, despite the current economic downturn, Japan and the United States continue to attract FDI inflows. This year's Investment report details the climate for FDI in each country and the work of the bilateral Investment Working Group. [ARTICLE 674](#)

**North Korea Profile: Missile Chronology 2008-09.** *Nuclear Threat Initiative.* July 2009.

The site shows the chronology of North Korea's missile chronology from 2008 to present. [ARTICLE 675](#)

**Ushering in Change: A New Era for U.S. Regional Policy in the Pacific.** *U.S. State Dept. Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs.* July 29, 2009.

Statement Before Asia, Pacific, Global Environment Subcommittee of House Foreign Affairs Committee

## **MIDDLE EAST ISSUES**

**Iraq and the Kurds: Trouble Along the Trigger Line.** *International Crisis Group.* July 8, 2009.

The report warns that a new and potentially destructive ethnic conflict has arisen between the Iraqi federal and Kurdistan's regional government. In particular, tensions have been building steadily along a new, undemarcated "trigger line", a curve stretching from the Syrian to the Iranian border, where the Iraqi army and Kurdish fighters are arrayed in opposing formations. Both sides have been maneuvering to gain political, military and territorial advantage before the U.S. withdrawal. Iraqi leaders and the U.S. must manage tensions between the Baghdad federal government and Kurdish authorities or face violence following the U.S. troop withdrawal. [ARTICLE 676](#)

**Saddam Hussein Talks to the FBI: Twenty Interviews and Five Conversations with "High Value Detainee #1" in 2004.** *National Security Archive, George Washington University.* July 1, 2009.

FBI special agents carried out 20 formal interviews and at least 5 "casual conversations" with former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein after his capture by U.S. troops in December 2003, according to FBI reports released as the result of Freedom of Information Act requests by the National Security Archive. Saddam denied any connections to the "zealot" Osama bin Laden, cited North Korea as his most likely ally in a crunch, and shared President George W. Bush's hostility towards the "fanatic" Iranian mullahs, according to the FBI records of conversations from February through June 2004. [ARTICLE 677](#)

**The Beginning of the End in Iraq** by Bruce Reidel. *Brookings Institute.* July 9, 2009.

The Iraqi government has now celebrated the withdrawal of American troops from its cities. The withdrawal of American combat troops from Iraq's cities is the beginning of the end of this war, or at least the American part of it, according to the report. It also adds that, hopefully, it will mark the end of an era of over-sizing Iraq in American policy. Most Americans long ago came to understand that the war was the wrong battle in the wrong place with the wrong foe. What is perhaps most remarkable, however, is just how little the war contributed, despite that enormous cost, to America's four key goals in the Middle East. [ARTICLE 678](#)

**Kashmir Militant Extremists** by Jamal Afridi. *Council on Foreign Relations.* July 9, 2009.

The author provides a profile of militant extremist groups in the disputed Himalayan region of Kashmir.

**Iraqi Refugees: Women's Rights and Security Critical to Returns.** *Refugees International.* July 15, 2009.

The Iraqi refugee crisis is far from over and recent violence is creating further displacement, says the study. Iraqi women will resist returning home if there is no focus on securing their rights as women and assuring their personal security and their families' well being. Reducing support to displaced families could force returns to insecure areas without adequate services and trigger additional instability in Iraq. [ARTICLE 679](#)

**Israel's Religious Right and the Question of Settlements.** *International Crisis Group.* July 20, 2009.

Benjamin Netanyahu is in a bind, according to the report. Israel is facing unprecedented pressure to halt all settlement activity. But the prime minister also heads a distinctly right-wing coalition and faces intense domestic pressure from settlers and their allies. They occupy key positions in the military, the government and the education and legal sectors, as well as various layers of the bureaucracy. [ARTICLE 680](#)

## **HEALTH & HEALTH CARE REFORM**

**Fever Pitch: Mosquito-Born Dengue Fever Threat Spreading in the Americas** by Kim Knowlton et al. *Natural Resources Defense Council.* July 8, 2009.

Two types of mosquitoes capable of transmitting the dengue fever virus are invading Southern and Mid-Atlantic states, creating conditions more favorable for an outbreak, according to a report by the Natural Resources Defense Council. Areas of the U.S. previously inhospitable to the disease now support populations of mosquitoes capable of carrying the virus, a problem that may worsen with global warming. An estimated 173.5 million Americans live in counties that now contain one or both of the mosquito species. [ARTICLE 681](#)

**Fork in the Road: Alternative Paths to a High Performance U.S. Health System** by Cathy Schoen et al. *Commonwealth Fund*. June 24, 2009.

A comprehensive approach to health insurance, provider payment, and care delivery system reforms has the potential to slow health care cost increases while achieving near-universal coverage, according to the report. The potential savings vary markedly, however, depending on whether or not a public insurance plan option is included and how such a plan is structured. [ARTICLE 682](#)

**U.S. Obesity Trends 1985-2008.** *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*. July 8, 2009.

The proportion of U.S. adults who are obese increased to 26.1% in 2008 compared to 25.6% in 2007. The data come from CDC's Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, a state-based phone survey that collects health information from adults aged 18 and over. In six states, Alabama, Mississippi, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee and West Virginia, adult obesity prevalence was 30% or more. Thirty-two states, including those six, had obesity prevalence of 25% or more. Only one state, Colorado, had a prevalence of obesity less than 20%. But no state showed a significant decrease in obesity prevalence from 2007 to 2008. [ARTICLE 683](#)

**President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief.** *U.S. Government Accountability Office*. July 15, 2009.

The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), first authorized in 2003 at \$15 billion for 5 years, was reauthorized in 2008 at \$48 billion through 2013. PEPFAR supports HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, and care services, primarily in Africa as well as in Asia and the Caribbean. In this report, responding to a legislative directive, GAO examined practices used in (1) selecting organizations to implement PEPFAR activities and (2) overseeing these organizations' PEPFAR activities. [ARTICLE 684](#)

**Health Insurance and Bankruptcy Rates in Canada and the U.S.** *Fraser Institute*. July 2009.

The current debate about reforming health care policy has included suggestions that nearly two-thirds of personal bankruptcies result from uninsured medical expenses or loss of income due to illness. Advocates of socialized medicine argue that this would not occur if the U.S. adopted a government-run health system similar to Canada's. As the report details, the evidence doesn't support the bankruptcy claim. [ARTICLE 685](#)

**If Health Surtax is 5.4%, Taxpayers in 39 States Would Pay a Top Rate Over 50%.** *Tax Foundation*. July 14, 2009.

The report shows that 39 states would see top tax rates exceed 50% under a health care funding plan announced by House Democrats. The latest proposal would impose a surtax of 1% on married couples with adjusted gross incomes (AGI) between \$350,000 and \$500,000 (singles between \$280,000 and \$400,000); 1.5% on couples with incomes between \$500,000 and \$1 million (singles earning between \$400,000 and \$800,000); and 5.4% on couples earning more than \$1 million (singles beyond \$800,000). [ARTICLE 686](#)

**The Importance of Competition and Antitrust Enforcement to Lower Cost, Higher-Quality Health Care.** *Testimony, Federal Trade Commission*. July 16, 2009.

The Federal Trade Commission told the Senate Subcommittee on Consumer Protection, Product Safety, and Insurance that competition and the agency's antitrust enforcement improves health care in the U.S. in two ways: by preventing or stopping anticompetitive agreements to raise prices and by helping to spur innovation that improves care and expands consumer access. [ARTICLE 687](#)

**2009 U.S. Index of Health Ownership.** *Pacific Research Institute*. July 2009.

Americans continue to lack the basic freedom to make their own health care decisions according to the annual report by the Pacific Research Institute. The Index measures the degree to which individuals, be they patients, health professionals, entrepreneurs, or taxpayers, "own" the health care in their states. [ARTICLE 688](#)

**Beyond the \$1.6 Trillion Sticker Shock** by Linda J. Blumberg and John Holahan. *Urban Institute*. July 2009.

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimated that the Senate Finance Committee's health reform plan would cost \$1.6 trillion over 10 years. The estimate left many with sticker shock. The authors place the estimate in context by showing that the costs of health reform are less than 1% of estimated GDP and a small fraction of expected health care spending for that period as well. They also contend that the costs associated with inaction are at least as big as those of directly addressing the problems we currently face. [ARTICLE 689](#)

**Analysis if the July Draft American Affordable Health Choices Act 2009** by John Sheils and Randy Haught. *Heritage Foundation*. July 23, 2009.

The analysis examines the impact the House health reform bill would have on private insurance when a government-run health plan is introduced in the marketplace. It finds that 88.1 million Americans could be transitioned out of their current plan as employers opt out of continuing their existing coverage. These Americans would lose the employer coverage they now have. The study also found that nationwide 103.9 million Americans would end up on the new government-run public plan. [ARTICLE 690](#)

**Are American Healthcare Costs Growing Unusually Fast?** By Andrew Biggs. *American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research*. July 9, 2009.

The Obama administration has pegged its healthcare reforms on the prospect of reducing the rate of healthcare cost growth, which the administration has termed "the real deficit" threat. A look at health data from the OECD provides some interesting context. Using OECD data, the author calculates the rate of "excess cost growth" for 23 countries over the period 1990-2006. Excess cost growth is the rate at which per capita health costs grow "in excess" economy-wide expansion. As it happens, the United States rate of excess healthcare cost growth from 1990-2006 is right about average among developed countries. [ARTICLE 691](#)

**The Case for Real Health Care Reform** by Joseph Antos. *American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research*. June 23, 2009.

Every decade or two, politicians attempt to reform the American health care system. Theodore Roosevelt pushed for national health insurance in his 1912 campaign under the Progressive party banner. More recently, Harry Truman, John Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton advanced health insurance proposals in presidential campaigns or while in office. Barack Obama has taken on the task of major health reform and, unlike his predecessors, he might succeed, according to the author. [ARTICLE 692](#)

**[The Economic Effects of Health Care Reform on Small Businesses and their Employees](#)** *Executive Office of the President of the United States*. July 25, 2009.

The report from the Council of Economic Advisers examines the health care challenges faced by small businesses and their employees as well as the benefits of health reform for small businesses and their employees.

**Getting the Treatment Right** by David Gratzer. *Manhattan Institute*. June 24, 2009.

David Gratzer, MD, is a physician born and trained in Canada. As the U.S. looks to reform its health care, he provides testimony on comparative health-care policy. He emphasizes that U.S. lawmakers should be cautious about borrowing reforms from other countries. [ARTICLE 693](#)

**Health Reform: Fact, Not Fiction** by Joanne Kenen. *New America Foundation*. July 22, 2009.

Four of the nation's top health care cost and quality experts from Dartmouth, the Institute of Healthcare Improvement, [Brookings](#) Engelberg Center and Harvard convened with health care providers, doctors and hospital executives from success story communities for a conference to discuss what works. [ARTICLE 694](#)

**Health Reform Interests but Confuses Public.** *Pew Research Center for the People & the Press*. July 2009.

The debate over revamping the nation's health care system is drawing increased public attention, according to the analysis. A third say they are following the health care debate very closely, up from 24% the previous week. And while news coverage of health care also increased over the past week, a sizable minority of Americans (45%) say the issue is receiving too little coverage. [ARTICLE 695](#)



**Seeing the Big Picture on Health Reform and Cost containment** by Josh Bivens. *Economic Policy Institute*. July 27, 2009.

According to the author, reducing the growth rate of health care costs will require a number of very specific policy interventions. Evidence from the international peers, U.S. domestic experience with publicly-financed versus private insurance, and simulations about the likely effects of future reform all back up the current reform proposals. He believes that President Obama understands the situation well. [ARTICLE 696](#)

**Prevention and Control of Seasonal Influenza with Vaccines** by Anthony E. Fiore et al. *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*. July 24, 2009.

The 2009 seasonal influenza recommendations include new and updated information. Highlights of the 2009 recommendations include 1) a recommendation that annual vaccination be administered to all children aged 6 months–18 years; 2) a recommendation that vaccines containing the 2009–10 trivalent vaccine virus strains be used; and 3) a notice that recommendations for influenza diagnosis and antiviral use will be published before the start of the 2009–10 influenza season. [ARTICLE 697](#)

## **MEDIA & COMMUNICAIONS**

**Meme-Tracking and the Dynamics of the News Cycle** by Jure Leskovec et al. *International Conference on Knowledge Discovery and Data Mining*. July 2009.

Tracking new topics, ideas, and “memes” across the Web has been an issue of considerable interest, according to the paper. Recent work has developed methods for tracking topic shifts over long time scales, as well as abrupt spikes in the appearance of particular named entities. However, these approaches are less well suited to the identification of content that spreads widely and then fades over time scales on the order of days, the time scale at which we perceive news and events. [ARTICLE 698](#)

[Media as Global Diplomat](#). United States Institute of Peace. June 2009.

This report summarizes this day-long summit that explored the topic in a global dialogue through interactive panels, videoconferencing, a documentary screening, and the participation of bloggers from around the world to find recommendations for the new administration to reengage the world with a public diplomacy strategy adapted to the digital age. **\*For a more detailed report please contact the American Reference Center**

**The Media Landscape in Iran** by Greg Bruno. *Council on Foreign Relations*. July 22, 2009.

Iranian authorities have reinforced controls on major domestic media following the upheaval over contested presidential election results in June 2009, says the report. One month after the disputed vote, nearly forty journalists remained in Iranian prisons. Yet Iran's media landscape, like many aspects of the theocratic regime, is riddled with contradictions. The flow of information into and within Iran has genuinely improved over the last decade. [ARTICLE 699](#)

**Wireless Internet Use** by John Horrigan. *Pew Internet & American Life Project*. July 22, 2009.

The survey shows that 56% of adult Americans have accessed the internet by wireless means. The most prevalent way people get online using a wireless network is with a laptop computer. It also finds rising levels of Americans using the internet on a mobile handset. One-third of Americans have used a cell phone or Smartphone to access the internet for email, instant-messaging, or information-seeking. [ARTICLE 700](#)

**Forcing the Net Through a Sieve: Why Copyright Filtering is not a Viable Solution for U.S. IPSS** by Mehan Jayasuriya et al. *Public Knowledge*. July 2009.

The analysis shows that filtering of Internet content as advocated by big media companies will not work and will be harmful to the Internet. The report, “... examines for the first time the complex topic of content filtering from the technical, economic and legal perspectives. Content filtering fails in all of these tests. Filtering will not be the ‘magic bullet’ that the media moguls want, but it could degrade and alter the Internet for everyone while invading the privacy of every Internet user. There is no reason that any Internet Service Provider or media company should even think about engaging in such activity.” [ARTICLE 701](#)